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LETTERS OF CONDOLENCE
ADDRESSED TO COUNT NICHOLAS LEWIS VON ZINZENDORF,
ON THE DEATH OF HIS SON CHRISTIAN RENATUS.

(Prepared for the Transactions of the Moravian Historical Society
by Bishop de Schweinitz.)

LETTERS OF CONDOLENCE.

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SOME years ago we found the following letters in the Bethlehem Archives, in a package tied up with the "Beylagen zum Jüngerhaus Diarium" for the year 1752.

Of Zinzendorf's twelve children eight died in infancy or early childhood, and only four grew up to maturity. These four were : the Countess Henrietta Benigna Justina, born December 28, 1725 ; the Count Christian Renatus, born September 19, 1727 ; the Countess Maria Agnes, born November 6, 1735 ; and the Countess Elizabeth, born April 25, 1740.

In 1749 Christian Renatus was summoned to London where his father was staying, in order that he might assist him in the discharge of his manifold duties. The young Count's health was not good ; symptoms of consumption had begun to appear ; and the disease was aggravated by the remorse which he experienced because he had been drawn into the extravagancies of the "Time of Sifting." He had always been devoted to Christ and loved Him with his whole heart, even in that unfortunate period. But now the more he mourned the nearer he drew to his Saviour, so that when he died, in the morning of the 28th of May, 1752, his faith triumphed gloriously and the intense longings of his heart were satisfied. He died in the twenty-fifth year of his age.

About two years earlier Zinzendorf had purchased Lindsey House, in Chelsea, with the intention of making it a governmental center for the whole Unitas Fratrum. Lindsey House, which is still standing, occupies the site of the residence of the celebrated

Sir Thomas More, to which he retired after resigning the Lord Chancellorship in the time of Henry the Eighth. It is an imposing building in the style of Louis the Fourteenth, and was a seat of the Dukes of Lancaster. A plot of ground back of this edifice, with a small chapel adjoining, Zinzendorf designated as a burial-place for the members of the Moravian Church in London. It is still used for this purpose, although Lindsey House no longer belongs to the Brethren.

Christian Renatus had been living in Westminster ; his remains, decked with flowers and a laurel wreath around his brow, were borne to a barque, moored at the Parliament House, and conveyed to Chelsea, where a temporary receptacle had been prepared for them in the burial-ground to which his father gave the name of Sharon. On the 29th of December following, in the night, in the presence of many Brethren, they were transferred to a vault which had meanwhile been constructed ; and there they rest to this day awaiting the resurrection of the just.

I.

FROM THE PRIVATE SECRETARY OF THE PRINCESS
OF WALES.

Augusta, the Princess of Wales, a daughter of the Duke of Saxe-Gotha, and wife of Frederick, Prince of Wales, was the mother of George the Third, of England.

Sir : — Her Royal Highness, the Princess of Wales, having received the Letter by which you notify the decease of your Son, Count Christian Renatus, I am commanded by Her Royal Highness to condole with you on this unfortunate occasion.

Having obeyed my orders, if you permit me to add my expressions of concern for this melancholy event, I shall trouble you no farther at present, than to beg of you to believe me, with very sincere and great respect,

Sir,

your most obedient and most humble Servant,

CRESSET.

Kiew, May 30, 1752.

II.

FROM THE HON. THOMAS PENN.

Thomas Penn was a son of William Penn by his second wife, and one of the Proprietaries of Pennsylvania.

Sir : — It was with great Concern I heard in the Country of the death of that most valuable young Nobleman your Son, whose death must be a very general Loss to the Publick, as his Example and Labours in Religious matters must have had great influence wherever he came.

As soon as I received the Notification your Excellency sent me of it, I went to Westminster Abbey to have paid you my Compliments of Condolence on so very affecting an occasion ; and finding you were retired into the Country, intended to stay till your Return, and then do it in Person. But as your Return is uncertain, I am unwilling to defer longer telling you my Concern, least it should be construed a want of regard to a Person of so much Merit.

I am fully persuaded you will be supported under this heavy Loss, as your Confidence is placed on a never-failing Foundation.

I am with great Truth,

Sir,

your Excellency's most obedient humble servant,

THOMAS PENN.

Spring Garden, June 12, 1752.

III.

FROM THE HON. ARTHUR ONSLOW, SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Arthur Onslow was chosen Speaker of the House of Commons in 1727 and filled the office for thirty-three years, "with higher merit," says his biographer, "probably, than any one either before or after him, with unequalled impartiality, dignity, and courtesy." He retired in 1761.

My Lord : — I was in the Country when I received the honor of your Lordship's Letter, and did intend to have waited upon you at my coming to Town : but as I find your Lordship is not here, I beg you will let this convey to your Lordship my sincere Condolence with you, on the death of your Son. The Character you give of him, speaks your Loss and your Comfort too ; I heartily wish you a Continuance of the Last, and am with great Respect, my Lord,

Your Lordship's most humble and most obedient servant,

ONSLow.

Leicester Street, June 7, 1752.

IV.

FROM LORD CARLISLE.

Lord Carlisle, Viscount Howard, belonged to a family prominent in English history.

Sir :—Though I am very much obliged to you, Sir, for the honour you did me by yours of the 21st, yet I am extremely concerned at the occasion ; and as I had some years ago the same misfortune, I can very sensibly feel it.

Mr. Cossart knows that I am very willing to give all proper encouragement to your industrious people, and as I suppose he will go into Scotland this year, he will visit all my estate in Cumberland, whether he thinks it will be a proper place to make a Settlement there. By what he told me, I was in hopes you would have made a tour into the North this year, and then I should have been in hopes of the honour of seeing you here ; being with the greatest regard,

Sir,

Your most obedient humble Servant,

CARLISLE.

Castle Howard, May 31, 1752.

V.

FROM LADY MARGARET INGHAM.

Lady Margaret Ingham, by birth Lady Margaret Hastings, sister to the Earl of Huntingdon, was the wife of the celebrated Benjamin Ingham, who produced a powerful revival in Yorkshire, England, and asked the Moravians to take charge of a number of his Societies, which led to the founding of the Moravian settlement at Lamb's Hill, now called Fulneck.

My Lord :—I return my sincere thanks for the Favour of yours, and I sympathise with you, not only on the Loss you have sustained as a Fellow Helper in the Lord's work, but on the sensible feelings you must have on the parting with so near a relation as an only Son : there is something, I know, one can't but feel, and which, I believe, is from the Lord ; tho' the translation one even thirsts after for one's self, and one rejoices at their happiness.

My dear Husband is from home, else would, I am certain, have joined with herein :

I beg leave to assure you of my respects, and am your Lordship's humble Servant, affectionately in the Wounds of the dear Lamb of God,

MARGARET INGHAM.

Abberforth, June 3, 1752.

VI.

FROM THOMAS WILSON, D.D., LL.D., BISHOP OF SODOR
AND MAN.

The venerable Bishop of Sodor and Man was remarkable for his humility, conscientiousness and devotedness to Christian duty—a man of prayer and deep piety. As his letter shows, he was nearly ninety years of age. He had been appointed President of the so-called “Reformed Tropus” in the Unitas Fratrum. The Lutheran, Reformed and Moravian Tropuses, or “manner of training,” were, Zinzendorf taught, all combined in the Unitas Fratrum; and over the first and second of these Tropuses, divines outside of the communion of the Brethren were asked to preside.

Most Illustrious Count and most Reverend Prelate:—This day I received your Highness's most kind and most condescending Letter, which I had no reason to expect, considering my great Neglect and Silence, in not acknowledging the Letters, Favours, and Remembrances of a Prince and Bishop so much superior to his most obliged and humble Servant.

I do most sincerely condole with your Excellency and the Church on account of the Death of Count Christian, your Lordship's only Son: the only alleviation of so grievous a Loss is the comfort, that a Name engaged in so great and good a work, was most surely written in the Lamb's Book of Life, with those Lambs he had sent before him, and those which he had prepared to come after him.

This makes the Case of mine and my only Son less afflicting: my great age (being 89) and his great disorders and relapses are tokens of no long life: so that our departure hence will not be attended with a very long Separation, but in a short time, thro' the grace of God, and the merits and mediation of our dear Redeemer, we shall be qualified to meet in the mansions of the Saints departed, in the House of the great God, waiting for a blessed Resurrection and a favorable Sentence.

In hopes of this blessed End of our Pilgrimage and Labours here, I beg your Lordship's prayers for myself and Son, that we may meet you and yours in the Paradise of God, there to live in peace and in hopes of a blessed Resurrection.

I shall be much obliged to Mr. Cossart, if he can have time, to let me know how your Excellency's great and good designs succeed in propagating the knowledge of the Gospel of Christ in foreign parts; that its saving truths may be received in that part of the world, which has been so long in darkness and under the power of Satan.

I am not surprised that the Evil Spirit and his Agents are disturbed with the prospect of losing so great a part of his subjects. A book was lately published in Ireland, entitled “The Heresy of the Moravians.” The Author thereof is not rejoicing with St. Paul, that Christ is preached, except it be in his own way.

My very old age and a wandering Gout for two years and a half past, I know, will by your Excellency's Goodness be accepted as an Apology for this hasty Answer from

Your Lordship's most obliged and most humble Servant,

THOMAS.

Isle of Man, June 15, 1752.

VII.

FROM THOMAS WILSON, D.D., CHAPLAIN TO THE KING
AND PREBENDARY OF WESTMINSTER.

Thomas Wilson was that son of the Bishop of Sodor and Man to whom he refers in the above letter. He became Prebendary at Westminster in 1743 and for forty-six years was Rector of St. Stephen's, at Walbrook. The anticipations of his father regarding his early death were not fulfilled, for he lived to be eighty-one years of age. He was the author of several works and had been appointed Deputy of the Reformed Troup of the Unitas Fratrum.

My Lord.—I should not have so long neglected answering your Lordship's kind Favour, had not I every day expected to have heard from my honour'd Father, who, I am afraid, by his long Silence is confin'd by some severe Fit of the Gout. Could I have acquainted your Loss with a good Account of him, it would, I know, have been agreeable News.

I condole with the Church of Christ at the great seeming Loss of your Lordship's excellent Son; but you have long learn'd the Lesson taught us by our blessed Saviour, of a pious Resignation to His blessed Will, who never willingly or in vain afflicts any of His faithful Servants. And unless we could dive into the Counsels of the Almighty, it would be presumptuous in any of us to say, what is good or bad, since we know from his Mouth of infinite Wisdom, that all things work together for good to them that love Him.

We cannot look upon that as any Loss, that your Son is happier sooner than by the Course of Nature might have been expected. But why should I pretend to give, where I should receive advice?

I wish your Lordship may find able and proper Assistants to carry on and extend the kingdom of the Redeemer in Parts where they have never yet heard of Him: and that you would believe me to be,

My Lord,

Your Lordship's most faithful and obedient Servant

THOMAS WILSON.

Bath, June 20, 1752.

VIII.

FROM LORD CHESTERFIELD.

Philip Dormer Stanhope, Earl of Chesterfield was the well-known English courtier, orator, and wit, renowned as a model of politeness and an oracle of taste, and not without fame as a diplomatist and statesman. In religious matters he was a skeptic.

Monsieur.—Je vous assure que j'e prends une véritable part à la perte que vous venez de faire. Le mérite reconnu de Monsieur votre fils vous le doit rendre d'autant plus sensible. Je ne vous offre point les lieux communs de consolation à cette occasion; votre religion et votre raison vous en présenteront les meilleures motifs.

Je me contenterai de vous assurer de la parfaite considération avec laquelle j'ai l'honneur d'être,

Monsieur, votre très humble et très obéissant Serviteur,

CHESTERFIELD.

Vendredi matin.

XI.

FROM THE HON. TAYLOR WHITE, JUDGE OF THE COURT.

My Lord.—The Loss of his Excellency Count Christian Renatus gives me inexpressibly concern not only on account of the multitude who were made happy by his Ministry, but for the particular and heavy Share, Your Grace sustains of that Misfortune in the Loss of so excellent a Son and so able a Coadjutor, whose early Piety could only be rewarded by his Lord, in whose Service he exhausted his Health and Strength. Permit me to join in the Wishes and prayers of many thousands, that you may be comforted and strengthened on this mournful occasion, so that you may be long enabled to support that eminent and laborious Station in the Church to which it has pleased the Divine Providence to call you.

I am your Grace's most obedient and most humble Servant,

TAYLOR WHITE.

Lincolnsinnfields, May 29, 1752.

X.

FROM THOMAS, BISHOP OF LONDON.

My Lord.—Yesterday I had the Honor of your Excellency's Letter. It was with great Concern that I received the News of the Death of Count Christian Renatus, and with a true Compassion for yourself. For tho' I am fully persuaded that your own Mind has furnished you with all the Consolation that true Religion and a firm dependence upon Providence can suggest; yet, since the best and the wisest are not exempt from a sense and feeling of affliction, you will give me leave to condole with you for this great Loss.

The tenderness you express for the many who will suffer by this Loss, suspending the Sense of your own Suffering in compassion to theirs, is an instance of that greatness of mind which is to be learn'd only in the School of Christ.

I pray God to make up the Loss to you and yours in every respect, and to conduct us all through the paths mark'd out by His Providence, to those happy Mansions, which He, who loved us, is gone before to prepare for us.

I am, my Lord, with great respect your Excellency's most obedient Servant and affectionate Brother,

THOMAS OF LONDON.

Fulham, May 30, 1752.

XI.

FROM THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY.

The Archbishop of Canterbury sends his compliments to My Lord Advocate, and begs leave to condole with him on the occasion of the late trying Accident in his Family. The Archbishop wishes all health and happiness to his Lordship.

(*Manu Propria.*)

XII.

FROM THE BISHOP OF WORCESTER.

May it please your Excellency: — Being at this place upon Account of my Health, the Honour of your Letter has not received so speedy an Acknowledgment as it would otherwise have done.

The Death of Count Christian Renatus must sensibly affect every body that was informed of his Christian and therefore amiable character.

The divine goodness can alone support the immediate Sufferers or supply so great a Loss to the Church of Christ.

However convinced of the Wisdom and Goodness of the divine Proceedings, 'tis impossible not to sympathise with so great an Affliction.

I have the Honour to be with the utmost Respect and Esteem, My Lord,
your Excellency's most obedient humble Servant,

WORCESTER.

Bristol, June 8, 1752.

XIII.

FROM GENERAL CADOGAN.

General Charles Baron Cadogan was the brother of William Earl and Baron Cadogan who, in 1722, succeeded Marlborough as commander-in-chief of the British Army, and from whom the writer of the letter inherited his title.

Sir: — I was honour'd, by last post, with your Letter of the 20th instant, giving me an Account of the death of Count Christian Renatus your Son. And although I had not the pleasure to be acquainted with him, do most sincerely condole with you on so great a Loss; whose personal merit must have vastly increased the Affliction of a tender Father, on so melancholy an occasion.

I am, with all due respect, Sir, your most humble and obedient Servant,

CADOGAN.

Caussham, May 31, 1752.